

Leptis Magna: “a heritage in war uniform” to be protected

Original

Leptis Magna: “a heritage in war uniform” to be protected / Netti, Rossana. - ELETTRONICO. - (2019), pp. 97-97.
(Intervento presentato al convegno Le Vie dei Mercanti XVII International Forum tenutosi a Napoli/Capri nel 6-8 June 2019).

Availability:

This version is available at: 11583/2750872 since: 2019-09-09T19:18:52Z

Publisher:

Gangemi Editore

Published

DOI:

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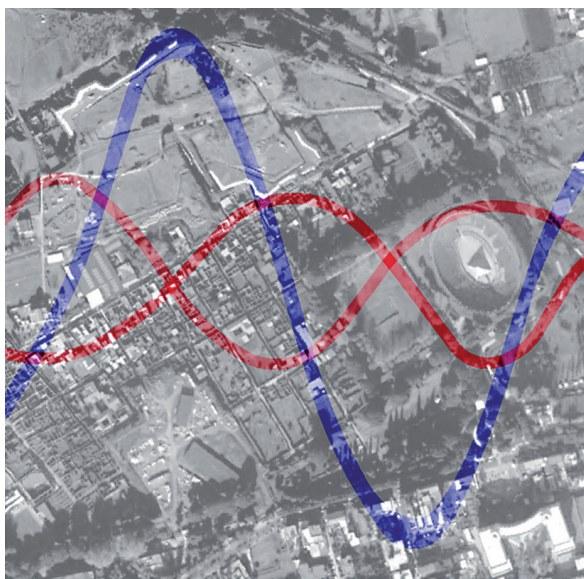
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ARCHITECTURE HERITAGE and DESIGN

Carmine Gambardella

XVII INTERNATIONAL FORUM

Le Vie dei
Mercanti



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Culture, Creativity, Contamination
Le Vie dei Mercanti
XVII International Forum

Editing: Alessandro Ciambrone

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Proprietà letteraria riservata

Gangemi Editore spa

Via Giulia 142, Roma

www.gangemieditore.it

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ISBN 978-88-492-3751-1

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Alessandra Avella

Professor of Drawing
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Alessandro Ciabrone

Ph.D. in Architecture (University of Campania) and Territorial Governance (Université Paris X)
UNESCO Vocations Patrimoine 2007-09 / FULBRIGHT Thomas Foglietta 2003-04

Rosaria Parente

Ph.D. in "Architecture, Industrial Design and Cultural Heritage" at University of Studies of Campania "Luigi Vanvitelli"

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ID 094 *Leptis Magna: “a heritage in war uniform” to be protected*

Rossana NETTI
Polytechnic of Turin
Italy

As stated by former Director-General of UNESCO Irina Bokova, “the heritage protection is the best way to create resilience in society, to recognize the past, but also to look to the future, as it is closely linked to the concept of identity. Without respect for the identity of peoples, it is not possible to achieve peace or reconciliation or even hope for the future”. This important warning that appeals to culture as an instrument of cohesion, leads us to reflect on the theme of preservation of cultural and historical heritage in war zones and - more generally - towards the protection of endangered cultural heritage. Currently, more than 50 UNESCO sites are included in the list of the heritage of humanity at risk, of which more than half due to wars and ruthless interests of terrorist networks. In 2016 the UNESCO commission has included in this list the ancient city of Leptis Magna, along with four other important sites in Libya, due to the massive damage caused by the civil wars that followed the fall of Gaddafi (in 2011) and due to threats that still weigh on these settlements. Result of a particularly fertile historical sedimentation, Leptis Magna remains an exceptional archaeological site for wealth and diversity. We cannot interrupt scientific research focused on this important heritage; everything that can be carried out in terms of documentation, cataloging, survey, restitution, can be used to compensate the injured assets and restore their identity when the conflicts will be over.